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## Evaluation of School Development Approaches by Administrators at TRNC State Primary Schools, According To Administrators, Teachers, and Parents

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### Abstract

The basic aim of this thesis is to look into the various dimensions of School Development Approaches used by Administrators in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) State Primary Schools, from the perspectives of Administrators, Teachers, and Parents. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected for the study and the research pattern was set as “content analysis” and “general scanning model”. Interview technique, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study. Random sampling technique of probability based sampling methods was used in order to establish the study group. A total of 57 participants were included in the research, of which 17 were administrators, 20 were teachers, and 20 were parents. Questions were prepared for the interview forms used in gathering data, taking into consideration the factors affecting school development. Administrators, teachers, and parents were asked the same questions. The researcher personally contacted all of the participants and answers to the questions were obtained through interviews. The findings of the research are summarized below: The number of female participants was larger. The largest age group of participants is 41-45. Among administrators and teachers, the participant group with the highest years of service has been working for 21 years or more; the participant group with the longest period of time in the same school have been working for 11-15 years. As for parents, the participant group has been parents at the same school for 1-3 years at the most. In answering questions in the interview form, concerning the school development approaches used by administrators, participants stated in a high percentage that; student performances in relation to education and training services are often evaluated; administrators pay attention to creating a positive organizational climate and culture with teachers and parents. Among the school development approaches used by administrators, participants stated that the least implemented areas of school development were lack of a library meeting the educational and training needs of the school, and not organizing in-service training for professional development of teachers. Parents form the largest group of participants who have the least amount of knowledge about the school development approaches implemented by administrators. It is observed that, according to the majority of participants, in relation to school development approaches by administrators, the school has a vision, individual training of students is given importance, student performances are often evaluated, the works to create a positive organizational climate and culture with teachers, students, parents, and close environment are given importance, in-service training of teachers is encouraged, and activities are designed for the awareness of students that they need. According to the majority of participants, in relation to the school development approaches implemented by administrators, there is no library to

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meet the educational and training needs of the school, and activities for the professional development of teachers are not designed. According to the majority of participants, in relation to the school development approaches implemented by administrators – although the percentages show variety and not in the highest percentage – it can be seen that new projects are produced at school, educational activities are carried out based on drama, and awareness created for parents that they need. As for having a building and yard suitable for educational and training works, getting feedback from graduates, other sections of the society joining the works in creating a positive organizational climate and culture at school, the administrators supporting teachers in creativity and innovativeness, organizing training activities aimed at the society, differences were observed in the approaches of administrators, teachers, and parents. In general, it can be seen that administrators and parents are in accordance with the school development approaches used by administrators.

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## Introduction

Balcı (2007) has defined school development as “creating internal conditions for achieving educational goals, as the final aim, in one or more schools, through a change of teaching/learning process and enabling school more effective”. Peker (1995) defined development of administration as “encompassing all efforts, initiated with the aim of forming an attitude, mechanism, and structure suitable to social needs, today’s conditions and developments by examining aims of administration, human, structural, technological (money, time, tools, methods, legislation) resources, with the aim of reaching these goal in coordination”.

“Effective administrators change people and institutions, widen visions, clarify goals, create permanent changes that accelerate development and make themselves perpetual” (Covey, 1997). School administration refers to concepts like innovation, development, progress that take place within the process of change in fields like school inspection and evaluation works, teaching methods, and teacher education (Altrichter, 2000). When talking about reform in schools and stating the characteristics of a school headmaster as “opportunistic, initiative, researcher, learner, reliable, communicative, information providing, answering, and load bearer”, Clarke (2000: 61) underlines that the real effectiveness is using all those characteristics in harmony.

The position of the school administrator as the leader of education, training, and development, is important. In an effort to shed light on the topic, this study is based on the approaches school administrations use in developing their schools, in “Creating Educational, Developmental, and Informative Activities in order to Create a Positive Organizational Climate and Culture in Education and Teaching for Teachers, Students, Parents, and Environment”, and the evaluation of these approaches by administrators, teachers, and parents. It was aimed to contribute to the educational system of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and the field of educational administration in a field not studied before.

## 2. Methodology

### 1.1. Research model

Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected in the research and the research pattern was established as “content analysis” and “general scanning model”. Interview technique, one of the qualitative research techniques, was used in the research. Semi-structured interview technique was used, which provides the researchers flexibility (Dağlı et al., 2009).

This research examines the different dimensions of school development approaches of administrators in TRNC state primary schools, according to the evaluative opinions of administrators, teachers, and parents. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected in the study, and research pattern was established as “content analysis” and “general scanning model”. Interview technique of qualitative research methods was used. Semi-structured interview technique was used in the study, which provides the researchers with flexibility.

### *1.2. Work group*

There are 86 primary schools under the Primary Education Directorate in the TRNC. A total of 57 participants, 17 administrators, 20 teachers, and 20 parents from these schools in five districts were included in the study. Random sampling method was chosen from probability based sampling methods, in order to establish the work group.

### *1.3. Data collection process*

Data for the study was collected from interviews at schools at times convenient to participants, between 17th January and 27th March. It was attempted to establish the different dimensions of the school development approaches used by administrators, based on the opinions of school administrators, teachers, and parents.

## **3. Findings and Interpretations**

Findings related to the research were obtained after the semi-structured interviews with the 57 participants. Researchers worked with the participants on 20 dimensions based on the approaches administrators used to develop their schools in “Creating Educational, Developmental, and Informative Activities in order to create a Positive Organizational Climate and Culture in Education and Teaching for Teachers, Students, Parents, and Environment”, and the evaluation of these approaches by administrators, teachers, and parents.

In answer to the question on the vision of the school for education and teaching, the views of the 17 administrators, 20 teachers, and 20 parents in the work group were, 9 administrators stated the vision of the school as “Striving for the completion of the academic, psychological and social developments; achieving success in academic, sportive, and social activities; continuously climbing one step up in every aspect successfully”. That is, expressing the school vision as achieving the development and success of the students in all aspects. Majority of the teachers (12 of them) stated the vision of the school as “Being successful in college entrance tests”. Majority of parents expressed two different opinions. 6 of them said the school’s vision was “to prepare students for a higher level of education successfully”. Again, 6 parents said “Keeping the academic success of students at a high level”, thus pointing to the preparation of students for a higher level of education and expecting students to show academic success as the vision of the school. A common view expressed by some administrators and some teachers as the vision of the school was “The educational system does not allow us to establish a vision”. Thus stating that vision formation is affected by the educational system. On the other hand Tekeli (2003) said that present systems generally can be obstructing innovations, however, an organization with a vision should be able to overcome this obstruction of the system with its approaches in practice. Only a few teachers said that the vision of the school is created at teacher meetings, with no positive or clear vision, not shared with the teachers by the administration, shaped according to the needs of the school. They said that a vision could not be created because of the changing policies of the ministry. “Reaching the aims established at branch meetings; the vision of the school is not clear and not shared with the teachers; it is not planned, aims are set in parallel with the needs of the school” were the words used by these teachers. Şişman (1999) stresses that the vision and mission of the school should be known and embraced by all stakeholders. It was observed that

Administrators and parents used more positive expressions on the vision of the school, while teachers used mostly negative expressions.

In answer to the question on new projects, aimed at getting better in education and teaching at schools, the majority of administrators (9 of them) said, in relation to projects and works, “Planning to bring technology to the school for a better infrastructure and equipment, enabling moving forward step by step”. The majority of the teachers expressed two different views. One group of teachers (6) expressed the same views as administrators, “Planning to bring technology to the school for a better infrastructure and equipment, enabling moving forward step by step”. Another group of teachers (6) said about the projects and works “Smart boards are put in some classrooms. Work is being continued for other classrooms”. The majority of parents (11) expressed the view “Works carried out in order to reach the highest level in education, in social activities, to achieve a better level, to

move forward”. Some administrators, teachers, and parents said that the projects and works carried out in the school were mostly concerned with the physical structure of the school.

#### **4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

##### *4.1. Conclusions*

In response to questions in the interview, on the topic of school development approaches used by administrators, majority of participants stated that student performances are often measured, and administrators pay attention to forming a positive organizational climate and culture with teachers and parents. The point they said was least done within the school development approaches used by administrators, was not having a library to meet the educational and teaching needs of the school, and not organizing activities for the professional development of teachers.

Parents form the largest group of the study, which does not have information on the school development approaches used by administrators. According to the majority of participants, as regards the school development approaches used by administrators, it is observed that schools have a vision, importance is given to individual education of students, student performances are often measured, efforts towards a positive organizational climate and culture among teachers, students, parents, and the close environment are taken seriously, in-service training of teachers is supported, students are offered activities for the awareness they need.

It was stated by almost all the participants that student performances on education and teaching services are often measured. This was expressed by all the administrators, and almost all the teachers and parents. It was also observed that there are tests applied by administrators, preparatory tests are given to fourth and fifth grades, administrators go into classrooms and evaluate student performances, students are rewarded at morning assemblies, and teacher evaluation of performances are taken seriously.

As for getting feedback about the graduates regarding educational and teaching services, the three participating groups have different opinions. While the administrators stated that they get feedback on their graduates, only half of the teachers supported this view. On the other hand, parents stated that there was no feedback on graduates. Half of the parents said they have no information on this topic. Feedback on the graduates is often received when those students visit their old schools, met in social events, by asking parents, by asking junior school teachers, and through social media. It was observed that no information was exchanged about graduates through communicating with state institutions within a legal procedure.

Half of the teachers and more than half of the administrators and parents stated that drama based activities are carried out at school, in relation to education and teaching services. It was also stated that drama based educational activities were carried out in the classrooms and in branch lessons, in branch activities. The need for having a drama room in schools and informing administrators and teachers about drama was also stated.

Almost all of the participants said that school administrators gave importance to establishing a positive organizational climate and culture at school with teachers. It was stated that dinner and special visits are organized at school, and that administrators and teachers have positive relationships.

It was made clear that festivals and sister school activities are organized, activities take place during and at the end of the school year, informative school excursions, picnics, competitions and other activities are organized, teachers and assistant headmasters of each branch work together for activities, and administrators have a positive and sincere communication with students.

It was stated by all of the administrators and parents, and almost all of the teachers that administrators gave importance to establishing a positive organizational climate and culture with parents. The participants were observed saying parents are invited to ceremonies and activities, they are contacted through information slips, phone, and e-mail, PTA activities are organized, tea parties and dinners are organized, parents are always welcomed by administrators, and parents can contact administrators whenever they need. Moreover, nineteen participants stated that parents are invited to schools, but interest is little.

#### 4.2. Recommendations

It is assessed that it will be appropriate for the vision of the school to be explicit and known and embraced by all stakeholders. Ali Balcı (2007) stated the need for the administrator to have an explicit vision for the education and teaching institution, and to convey this vision to all members of the organization, thus ensuring coordination.

It is assessed that, in order to reach a better level at school in relation to education and teaching, and to provide contribution in every sense, it seems appropriate to carry out work in social activities as well as for equipment. Quality begins with the individual. After the individual is placed where he/she should be, then the necessary equipment and needs for practice can be discussed (İmai, 1997).

The needed environment should be prepared in schools, so that students can access knowledge and use it at appropriate times. It is also assessed that providing a suitable environment for a library, which can answer the educational and teaching needs, and having a library in each school is essential. Rapidly developing technology made the need for knowledge a priority. It is expected that it is not sufficient to obtain knowledge, but correct knowledge should be expressed in a holistic way at the appropriate time (Tecim, Gökşen, 2009).

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